(d) whether he would issue instruction for writing the names of these stations of local trains in Mumbai in Urdu;

(e) if so, by when; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (f) As per the information provided by the Registrar General of India, according to Census of India, 1991 only 12.1% of the total population of Mumbai reported Urdu as their mother-tongue. As per the language policy of the Central Government, the Station Name Boards are to be displayed in order of Regional Language followed by Hindi and English in non-Hindi speaking areas. Thus, station name boards in Mumbai are displayed in Regional Language (Marathi), Hindi and English. Further Urdu has also not been accorded the official status of second language of this State.

Strengthening Railway Bridges

1127. SHRI R. K. ANAND: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of existing railway bridges are between 80 to 100 years old and were constructed to handle only lighter standard of loading than prevalent, *i.e.* there has been tremendous growth of load both in freight as well as passenger traffic since the construction of these bridges;

(b) if so, the steps taken to strengthen the existing railway bridges to handle heavier load of freight and passengers; and

(c) the steps taken to replace these railway bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) It is a fact that about 75600 bridges out of 1,19,984 bridges are between 80 to 100 years old and were constructed to handle loading prevalent at the time of their construction.

(b) and (c) In case of introduction of heavier axle load in a particular section, thorough study is carried out for suitability of existing bridges. If required, bridges are rehabilitated/rebuilt to bear the heavier axle load of freight/passenger trains.

Repair & Rehabilitation of old railway bridges is a continuous process. A well laid down system of multi-tier inspection of bridges is followed in the Indian Railways. The rehabilitation/rebuilding of the bridges is carried out based on the physical condition as ascertained during inspection and not on the basis of age alone. In case a section is selected for introduction of heavier loads, all the bridges of that section are reviewed and strengthened as per requirement.

Bangalore-Nizamuddin Superfast Train

1128. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that there is a demand from the people of Davangere and other districts in Karnataka to run Bangalore-Nizamuddin Superfast Train *via* Davangere instead of Guntakal;

(b) if so, the action, if any, to be taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, whether Government will take steps to run the above train *via* Davangere to help large number of commuters of Northern Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) A request has been received from an honourable Member of Parliament for diversion of 2429/2430 Nizamuddin-Bangalore Rajdhani Express (4 days a week) *via* Davangere once a week.

(b) and (c) At present 6217/6218 Nizamuddin-Mysore Swarnajayanti Express (weekly) is available *via* Davangere-Bangalore. Railways do not propose either to introduce additional service or to divert any of the existing services between Delhi-Bangalore to run *via* Davangere, at present.

Increasing bogies in Ratnachal Express

1129. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need to increase the sitting capacity of Ratnachal Express plying between Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam in South Central Railways;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is also a need to add one more AC sitting compartment in Ratnachal Express;